

Root Canal Treatment

What is Root Canal Treatment?

Root Canal Treatment (RCT) is the removal of the damaged or infected dental pulp (nerve) and replacement with a special filling.

What is dental pulp?

The pulp is the soft tissue deep inside a tooth, which contains nerves, blood vessels and connective tissue. It extends from the crown to the tip of each root. The pulp is important for the normal growth and development of the tooth during childhood. Once the tooth is fully formed the main source of nutrition for the tooth comes from the tissues surrounding the root.

A tooth can function normally without its pulp and can be kept indefinitely with appropriate full coverage restorations.

What is a Root Canal?

A root canal is a miniature tube that houses the pulp in the root portion of a tooth. In the centre of the tooth it forms an area called the pulp chamber.

Front teeth usually have one root canal whilst back teeth usually have multiple canals.



How does the pulp become diseased?

Infection or inflammation of the pulp can be caused by:

- deep decay
- repeated dental work to the tooth
- trauma
- loose fillings
- a crack or chip in the tooth
- severe grinding or wear of tooth
- gum disease

What are the symptoms of pulp damage?

They may include pain, sensitivity to hot and cold and tooth discolouration. Once the pulp becomes infected, the infection can then spread through the opening at the tip of the root to the surrounding jawbone and an abscess occurs. This results in pain to bite on the tooth and swelling or soreness in the gums surrounding the tooth. On occasion the pulp degenerates quietly without giving any symptoms and the only sign of a problem is seen on x-rays.

Are there any risks?

As with any medical or dental treatment there are always some small risks associated with treatment. Those include: inability to remove all the infection; fine instruments breaking within the canals or splitting of very weak teeth.

Root Canal Treatment (RCT) is however, one of the most successful dental treatments available today with more than 95% of cases treated being successful.

Is there an alternative to RCT?

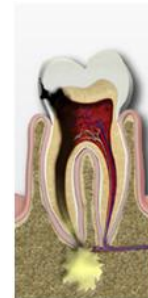
There is no real substitute for your own tooth. It is more efficient in chewing and biting than an artificial tooth.

The only alternative method to removing the infection is to extract the tooth. This requires the space to be replaced with an artificial tooth otherwise the adjoining teeth can move. This can interfere with biting and chewing and can lead to other complex problems like gum disease, decay of other teeth, jaw joint and jaw muscle problems.

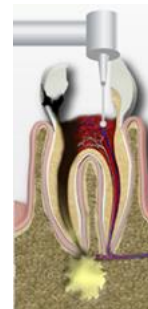
Referral

At Cannon Hill Dental we may refer to experienced specialists because we believe they can obtain the best outcome possible for you.

How is Root Canal Treatment Performed?



Tooth has had extensive decay that has made its way into the tooth pulp. The tooth is now abscessed.



The tooth will be anaesthetised. Any decay and existing restorations are removed.



The pulp is removed and the root canals are cleaned and shaped. If there is extensive infection an antibiotic cream is placed in the canals and temporarily sealed. If this is done a second appointment will be required to complete the treatment. This step can almost immediately relieve the pain.



The root canals are sealed with a special root canal filling to prevent re-infection. A final restoration is then placed. The tooth will then require a crown to protect it from splitting. Depending on the amount of tooth structure remaining often a post will need to be placed internally to support the crown.

